

A Fulfilled Christian Life, Part 6 - Romans 12:9 – January 13th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part six of a series titled; "A Fulfilled Christian Life."
- Beginning here with verse nine, the Apostle Paul rounds a corner of sorts, and goes from the "how" of a fulfilled Christian life to the "what."
- Verses 1-8 show us how we can live a fulfilled life in Christ, while verses 9-21 show us what that fulfilled life in Christ will actually look like.
- In other words, once I've learned "how" it is I can live that fulfilling life in my walk with Christ, then, what follows is what my life will be like.
- Suffice it to say I don't think there's a one of us who wouldn't want their life to resemble that which Paul describes in the rest of the chapter.
- I'm of the belief that it's for this reason Paul lists a number of these character traits and as such, we'll look at each one of them individually.
- Personally as your pastor it's my hope and prayer that the teaching in the remainder of this chapter will so woo us to so want this life for us.
- By that I mean, once we have an understanding of these character traits and that they can become real in my life, I will want this for my life.
- Would to God that we would so covet this kind of a holy and godly life, knowing that it's pleasing to God, and that it's God's will for my life.

1. A Genuine Love (Verse 9a)

(9a) Love must be sincere.

- Here in the first part of verse nine, the Apostle Paul starts with first things first namely, love, in that love will mark the fulfilled Christian life.
- This love is the real deal in how it's genuine and sincere, and as such will come from the filling to overflowing of the Holy Spirit in ones life.
- This is the first fruit, if you will of the Holy Spirit, such that a sincere and genuine love will be that which grows first and foremost in my life.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that the litmus test by which to know whether it's sincere love or not is, am I wanting to take or give.
- If I'm empty in my Christian life, I'll seek to take in my attempt to fill the void in my Christian life. However, if I'm fulfilled, I'll seek to give.
- The perfect example of this is in John 3:16 where God, Who is love, and Who so loved, the world, that He "gave" His only begotten Son.
- Show me a Christian who is genuinely and sincerely loving, and I'll show you a Christian who because of their love, will show it and give it.
- Conversely, show me a Christian who is unfulfilled and discontent, and I'll show you a Christian who because of this will only seek to take.
- Try as one may, there's absolutely no way that this kind of insincere and disingenuous love will ever be capable of giving, as it's nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NIV (1) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. (2) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (3) If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

2. A Hatred of Evil (Verse 9b)

(9b) ... Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

- In the second part of verse nine, Paul seemingly connects the dots, as it were, of hating that which is evil and clinging to that which is good.
- The reason I say that is because it would seem to infer that I'll be clinging to what's good proportionate to my hating and abhorring of evil.
- Perhaps better said, this abhorring of evil serves as a catalyst of sorts, in the sense that I will find myself clinging to that, which is good.
- Furthermore, loosening my grip on this evil world is a catalyst to tightening my grip by clinging to the world to come when the Savior comes.
- Sadly, many a Christian lives an unfulfilled life all because they do not hate evil, thus they will neither cling to the good, nor long for the Lord.
- The truth of the matter is, they love the world, and the things of the world so much, that they can neither love God, nor will they fear God.

Proverbs 8:13 NIV To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

Psalms 97:10a NIV Let those who love the LORD hate evil, ...

Amos 5:15a NIV Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. ...

- Be that as it may, I honestly don't know how we could ever hope to live joy filled and fulfilled lives in this evil world without clinging to good.
- Namely, the clinging to that blessed hope, blessed assurance that this evil world is not our home, and the Lord is coming to take us home.
- For me, it's the only thing that keeps me sane. If this world is our home and this is as good as it gets, then you might as well shoot me now.
- Thankfully, for the Christian, this world is not our home, so much so that we hate the evil in this world, which propels us to cling to the next.
- If you really think about it, if we could somehow arrive at the place where we are living in a Christian utopia, we'll never want to leave here.
- This is why the pages of Holy Writ are replete with how living for this fallen world will always leave us empty, so as to point us to the next.

Romans 8:19-23 NIV The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. (20) For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (22) We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (23) Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NIV (16) Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. (17) For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. (18) So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Acts 14:22b NIV ... "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," ...

- I'll close with a question, and please know that it's one for which I ask of myself as well, "are these character traits real in my Christian life?"
- More specifically, am I genuinely and sincerely loving, and truly and honestly clinging to the Lord's return in my hatred of evil in this world?
- If not, could it be that I need look no further to how it is that I'm living for this world in my love of this world? Is that why I'm so unfulfilled?